



Policy #13
Accountability and Transparency
Approved by Council on: December 19, 2007

TOWNSHIP OF SOUTHGATE
Accountability and Transparency Policy
Effective January 1, 2008

Policy Statement:

The Corporation of the Township of Southgate (the Township) is vitally interested and committed to ensuring an accountable and transparent corporation. Accountability, transparency and openness are standards of good government that enhance public trust. They are achieved through the Township adopting measures ensuring, to the best of its ability, that all activities and services are undertaken utilizing a process that is open and accessible.

Legislation:

Section 270 (1) of the Municipal Act, 2001 as amended (the Act) requires that all municipalities adopt and maintain a policy for the manner in which the municipality will try to ensure that it is accountable to the public for its actions and that its actions are transparent to the public.

Application:

This policy applies to the actions or decisions to be undertaken or made by Council, all committees including sub committees and task forces, boards and staff, so as to increase the accountability and transparency of the municipal decision making process.

Council acknowledges that it is responsible to provide good government for its residents in an accountable and transparent manner by encouraging public access and participation to ensure that decision making is responsive to the needs of its residents and receptive to their opinions.

The provisions for accountability and transparency as contained in this Policy as well as related policies and by-laws are considered a minimum and may be exceeded at the discretion of the appropriate party.

Definitions:

- i. **Accountability** - The principle that the Township will be responsible to its stakeholders for decisions made and policies implemented, as well as its actions and inactions.
- ii. **Transparency** - The principle that the Township actively encourages and fosters stakeholder participation and openness in its decision making processes. Additionally, transparency means that the municipality's decision making process is open and clear to the public.

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Policy Requirements

The principles of accountability and transparency shall apply equally to the political process and decision making and to the administrative management of the Township.

i. Financial Matters

The Township will be open, accountable and transparent to its stakeholders in its financial dealings as required under the Act. Some examples of how the Township provides such accountability and transparency are as follows:

- External audit
- Reporting and Statements
- Long term financial planning
- Asset management
- Purchasing and procurement
- Fees and Charges
- Development Charges
- Budget process

ii. Internal Governance

The Township's administrative practices ensure specific accountability on the part of its employees through the following initiatives:

- Performance management and evaluation
- Human Resources Manual which includes, but is not limited to, policies such as recruitment, orientation, continuing education, standards of conduct and compensation and benefits
- Health and Safety Policy

iii. Public Participation and Information Sharing

The Township ensures that it is open and accountable to its stakeholders through implementing processes outlining how, when and under what rules meetings will take place. The Township's meetings will be open to the public when and as required under the Act, and members of the public will have an opportunity to make delegations as provided in the Procedural Bylaw. In addition, the Township has adopted policies that ensure that participation by the public can be meaningful and effective, through timely disclosure of information by various means including print media, the Township website, public postings, etc. Some specific examples include:

- Procedural Bylaw
- Records Retention Bylaw
- Notice Bylaw
- Sale and Disposition of Land Bylaw
- Closed Meeting Investigator Bylaw
- Delegation of Authority Bylaw

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Other Accountability Measures

The Township shall also maintain open, accountable and transparent governance by abiding by the following:

- Municipal Conflict of Interest Act
- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection and Privacy Act

Updating Policy

The Township Clerk is hereby authorized to update this policy with changes to bylaw and policy references for those bylaws and policies listed in this policy. Any additions or deletions to the policy shall be endorsed by Township Council.